

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-34 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 27 are amended to correct minor informalities. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the amendments to claims 1 and 27 do not raise new issues. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims, and the drawings. Withdrawal of the rejections in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amended claims is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments: (1) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (2) do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution without incorporating additional subject matter; (3) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and/or (4) place the application in better form for appeal if necessary. Entry is thus requested.

I. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 1-11 and 16-34 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 3,520,568 to White et al. (hereinafter "White") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,082,787 to Chioffi et al. (hereinafter "Chioffi"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a dryer which includes an apparatus for opening and closing a door. The apparatus includes, *inter alia*, a pair of holders provided to confront each other in the latch body and configured to releasably hold the hanging portion, a pair of springs provided at a rear of the holders, respectively, and a pair of support members provided on the latch body, wherein each support member is configured to support a rear portion of one of the

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springs so that the springs remain stable as the holders move. Independent claim 27 recites similar features in varying scope. As acknowledged by the Examiner in the remarks regarding independent claims 1 and 27, White neither discloses nor suggests such features, or the respective claimed combinations of features. Further, Chioffi fails to overcome the deficiencies of White.

Chioffi discloses a device 1 for locking a door P of an appliance. The device 1 includes a support housing 2 fixed to a structural portion S proximate an opening O in the appliance, and an engagement member A provided at a corresponding position on the door P. The engagement member A is rotatably coupled to the door P about a pin B, and is inserted into and removed from the housing 2 through an aperture 3 in the housing 2. A retainer 4 is slidably mounted in the housing 2, and includes a window 5 facing the aperture 3 so as to allow for engagement between the engagement member A and the retainer 4.

When the door P is open, the retainer 4 is held in a rest position by a spring 6. Electromechanical control of the appliance is such that it cannot be operated while the retainer is in this rest position. To close the door P, the engagement member A is introduced into the aperture 3 and window 5, an inclined surface of a hook portion 21 of the engagement member A slides along an inclined surface 3a of the aperture 3, causing the engagement member A to rotate about the pin B until the corner of the hook 21 is caught by a corner formed by the inclined surface 3a and a planar surface 3b of the aperture 3. This causes the retainer 4 to compress the spring 6. To open the door P, the engagement member A is rotated in the opposite direction about the pin B to release the engagement, and the spring 6 is decompressed,

thus pushing the engagement member A out through the window 5 and the aperture 3.

The housing 2 also includes upper and lower stops 8 and 9 which are vertically translatable through the force of springs 10 and 11. Each of the stops 8 and 9 includes a corresponding locking projection 8a and 9a. When the door P is open and the retainer 4 is at rest, the force of the springs 10 and 11 causes locking projections 8a and 9a to be aligned with notches 12 and 13 formed in the retainer 4, thus blocking access to the interior of the support housing 2 and preventing the retainer 4 from leaving the rest position. Introduction of the engagement member into the aperture 3 forces the stops 8 and 9 apart and compression of the springs 10 and 11, allowing the retainer 4 to move.

Chioffi clearly discloses that the stops 8 and 9 (compared in the Office Action to the holders recited in independent claims 1 and 27), and in particular, the locking projections 8a and 9a, engage the retainer 4. Chioffi neither discloses nor suggests that the stops 8 and 9 in any way hold or engage the engagement member A and/or the hook portion 21 of the engagement member A (compared in the Office Action to the hook and hanging portion recited in independent claims 1 and 27). Thus, Chioffi neither discloses nor suggests a pair of holders, or at least one holder, configured to releasably hold a hanging portion as recited in independent claims 1 and 27, respectively.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 27 are allowable over the applied combination, and thus the rejection of independent claims 1 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White and Chioffi should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 2-11, 16-26 and 28-34 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 1

and 27, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

The Office Action rejects claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White and Chioffi in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,489,864 to Cravener (hereinafter “Cravener”). The Office Action also rejects claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White and Chioffi in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,480,862 to Fleming (hereinafter “Fleming”). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Dependent claims 14 and 15 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, from which they depend, as well as for their added features. Further, Cravener is merely cited as allegedly teaching the use of bolts, and Fleming is merely cited as allegedly teaching a fixing plate screw coupled to one side of a door jamb. Thus, Cravener and Fleming, either alone or in combination, fail to overcome the deficiencies of White and Chioffi. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 14 and 15 are allowable over the respective applied combinations, and thus the rejection of claims 14 and 15 should be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9, 11-17 and 19-34 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,869,952 to Saunders (hereinafter “Saunders”). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As acknowledged by the Examiner in the remarks regarding independent claims 1 and 27, White neither discloses nor suggests all the features of these claims, or the respective claimed combinations of features. Saunders fails to overcome the deficiencies of White.

Saunders discloses a door latch for a refrigerator, including a diamond shaped striker 29 which extends from a door 12 into the U-shaped outer cabinet structure of the refrigerator,

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designated a latch casing 31. The latch includes a pair of retainers 36 each extending between a pair of pivot pins 38 and 39, including coil springs 47 surrounding each retainer 36. A U-shaped arm 41 is pivotably attached at the pivot pin 39, with rollers 42 and 44 at its opposite ends, thus allowing the arms 41 to pivot as the striker 29 is inserted into or removed from the latch and the springs 47 are extended or compressed. Saunders neither discloses nor suggests any type of support member which supports a rear portion of either of the springs 47, let alone in a manner in which the springs 47 remain stable as the retainers 36 move. Rather, because each end of each retainer 36 is pivotably mounted at the pivot pins 38 and 39, with the springs 47 surrounding the retainers 36, the springs 47 clearly must also rotate/translate with the retainers 36 as they rotate about the pins 38 and 39 and the springs 47 are extended or compressed through the action of the striker 29. Thus, Saunders neither discloses nor suggests a pair of support members as recited in independent claims 1 and 27.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 27 are allowable over the applied combination, and thus the rejection of independent claims 1 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over White and Saunders should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 2-9, 11-17, 19-26 and 28-34 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 1 and 27, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

II. Double Patenting Rejection and Terminal Disclaimer

The Office Action rejects claims 1-34 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over claims 1-31 of U.S. Patent No. 6,954,992 to Hwang

(hereinafter "Hwang"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant maintains the traversal of this obviousness-type double patenting rejection set forth in the Reply filed February 9, 2006. More specifically, Applicant maintains that claims 1-34 of the present application are not obvious over claims 1-31 of Hwang. However, notwithstanding that many of the claims in the present application recite features not recited in claims 1-31 of Hwang, merely to expedite prosecution of the application, Applicant encloses a Terminal Disclaimer. It is respectfully submitted that the Terminal Disclaimer is sufficient to overcome the double patenting rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-34 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting is respectfully requested.

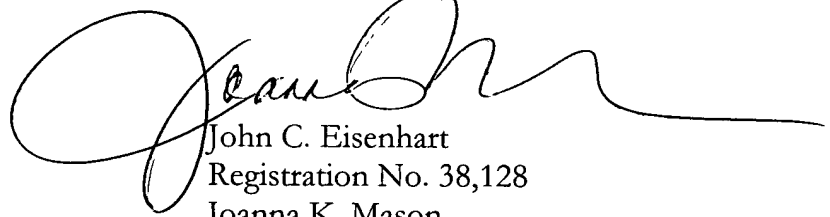
III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: October 5, 2006

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